

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 TRSE-00 /057 W

-----005054 072115Z /21

P 072015Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 418

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 6762

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, CI, ELAB

SUBJECT: THRUST AND PARRY

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 6703 (B) SANTIAGO 6650

1. SUMMARY: FENCING BETWEEN THE GOC AND ITS OPPONENTS CONTINUE AS THE JUNTA'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY APPROACHES. A FIST FIGHT DEVELOPED AT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY SEPTEMBER 6 WHEN RIVAL GROUPS CLASHED. POLICE BRIEFLY DETAINED A DOZEN YOUTHS DEMONSTRATING IN THE PLAZA DE ARMAS LATER THE SAME DAY. ANOTHER SCORE OF DETENTIONS ARE BEING CARRIED OUT UNDER THE STATE OF SIEGE POWERS IN EFFECT AT EL LOA PROVINCE IN REGION II. THE GOC BLAMES THESE INCIDENTS ON COMMUNISTS SOMETIMES ABETTED BY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND STATES IT WILL ACT FIRMLY IN THE FACE OF THEIR ATTEMPTS TO RESSURECT POLITICAL TURMOIL. OPPONENTS OF THE GOC WANT TO INCREASE DOMESTIC PRESSURE ON THE REGIME WHICH THEY SEE ENTERING A CRUCIAL PERIOD OF INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. MINI-RUMBLE AT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY: ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS, THE INCIDENT BEGAN IN MID-MORNING WHEN HEAD OF THE THEOLOGY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION BEGAN READING A STRONG PROTEST AGAINST REPRESSION IN NICARAGUA. OTHER STUDENTS, INCLUDING THE OVERALL STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, ENGAGED IN A SHOUTING CONTEST WHICH PITTED THOSE CHAMPIONING "PEACE AND LIBERTY" AGAINST THOSE YELLING "LONG LIVE PINOCHET AND THE JUNTA".

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FISTICUFFS ENSUED DURING WHICH SEVERAL OF THE OUTNUMBERED PROTESTERS WERE SILENCE. UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCED THAT THE DEMONSTRATION APPARENTLY HAD BEEN PREARRANGED AND INCLUDED A NUMBER OF NON-CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS. IT SAID THAT UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT PERMIT RENEWED POLITICIZATION OF THE CAMPUS. THE PRO-JUNTA STUDENT ORGANIZATION DESCRIBED THE INCIDENT AS PART OF AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN BY MARXISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS.

(COMMENT: AS REPORTED REF A, PDC YOUTH ACTIVISTS HAD PLANNED A SERIES OF SUCH CONFRONTATIONS IN UNIVERSITIES).

3. TWELVE DETAINEE BRIEFLY: POLICE BROKE UP AN AFTERNOON DEMONSTRATION CONDUCTED BY UP TO 200 PEOPLE IN THE PLAZA DE ARMAS ON SEPTEMBER

6. THE PROTESTERS WERE VOCIFEROUSLY ENGAGED IN DISTRIBUTING ANTI-GOVERNMENT PAMPHLETS. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE PAMPHLETS BORE THE INSIGNIA OF THE CHILEAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCCH) AND PCCH YOUTH. ONE PRO-GOVERNMENT RADIO STATION ASSERTED THAT PDCERS WERE ALSO AMONG THE DEMONSTRATORS. POLICE RELEASED THE DOZEN (9 MEN, 3 WOMEN) AFTER BOOKING THEM AND VERIFYING THEIR IDENTITIES.

4. MORE DETENTIONS IN THE NORTH: IN SPITE OF THE END OF THE WORKERS' PROTEST AT CHUQUICAMATA COPPER MINE, THE GOC STATES IT INTENDS TO CONTINUE IN EFFECT THE STATE OF SIEGE IMPOSED ON THE AREA UNTIL SATISFIED THAT "POLITICAL AGITATORS" HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY CONTROLLED. THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT 15 MORE PEOPLE HAD BEEN DETAINED UNDER STATE OF SIEGE POWERS AND ARRESTS OF 17 MORE HAVE BEEN ORDERED. ACCORDING TO ONE LABOR LEADER AT THE MINE MOST OF THOSE DETAINED SO FAR WERE UNKNOWN AND THOUGHT TO BE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, NOT COMMUNISTS.

5. COMMENT: IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT PRIOR TO THE JANUARY 4 PLEBISCITE, OPPONENTS OF THE JUNTA STAGED LIGHTNING DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA. THEN AS NOW, THE MEDIA REPORTED THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INCIDENTS. EVENTUALLY THE GOC CAPITALIZED UPON THEM TO REMIND THE PEOPLE OF THE DISRUPTIONS SO COMMON DURING THE ALLENDE PERIOD. OPPONENTS NOW BELIEVE THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO INCREASE DOMESTIC PRESSURE ON THE REGIME WHICH THEY SAY IS HEADING FOR A CRUCIAL PERIOD OF INTERNATIONAL STRAIN (I. E., THE LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE AND BEAGLE CHANNEL SITUATION). BUT ONCE AGAIN THE GOC MAY BE ABLE TO TURN THESE "CHALLENGES" TO ITS ADVANTAGE. UNIVERSITY FERMENT AND STREET DEMONSTRATIONS HOLD LITTLE APPEAL AS YET TO THE VAST MAJORITY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTIA06762
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780365-0128
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780993/aaaacyuo.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d2f96856-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SANTIAGO 6703, 78 SANTIAGO 6650
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1518140
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THRUST AND PARRY
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, ELAB, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d2f96856-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014